

The present invention is directed to “an integrated system and method for pre-processing electronic data requests before they are sent to an order processing system” (page 4, lines 18-20). As described in page 3, line 14 to page 4, line 27 of the present application, conventional pre-processing systems are not directly applicable to an electronic data exchange (EDI) method. Therefore, none of the conventional pre-processing systems are capable of providing an intelligent editor within a customer order fulfillment system or making a post-processing modifications to a customer order through the customer order fulfillment system. Also, conventional pre-processing systems do not allow corrections to be made to electronic data requests before the electronic data request are sent to an order processing system. Further, conventional pre-processing systems do not allow electronic data requests to be rejected so that the faulty electronic data requests are not sent to an order processing system.

To solve these problems, the present invention provides an integrated system which (a) pre-processes electronic sales order (ESO) data prior to transmitting to the order processing system (claim 1, line 4), (b) performs an availability check to determine the portions of the ESO data which can be satisfied, and (c) transmits at least a portion of the ESO data to the order processing system, as recited in claim 1. These features are shown in Fig. 2 of the present application, in which the principle elements of an order intercept system is shown.

By way of illustration, in order to perform the pre-processing of ESO data, the order interceptor 201 interfaces with (i) the business rule database 201 for checking customer specific business rules, (ii) the sales order workbench 206 for correcting processing problems, and (iii) the reject acknowledgement system 207 for stopping a

rejected order from being processed by the order processing system 209. To perform an availability check, the order interpreter 201 interfaces with the ATP system 204 to determine if an ordered material is available for a given quantity and delivery date. Once the pre-processing is completed by the order interceptor 201, at least a portion of the ESO data is transmitted to the order processing system by the router 208, which transmits the pre-processed data to a designated order processing system 209, for example, OEMLS order processing system 211 or SAP AG Corp. order processing system 212. Accordingly, the present invention is capable of making corrections of electronic data requests before the electronic data requests are sent to an order processing system, and further is capable of rejecting the electronic data requests so that the faulty electronic data requests are not sent to an order processing system.

In rejecting the present claims, the Examiner maintained the previous position that (a) the steps/functions of Blinn, et al. can be split into two separate processing systems: a “pre-processor” and a “processor” and (b) the claimed invention performs exactly the same steps/functions of the “pre-processor” of the Blinn, et al. On this basis, the Examiner asserted that it would have been obvious to split the system of Blinn, et al. in order to improve overall system performance/throughput because the claimed invention is merely “constructing a formerly integral structure in various elements” which requires only routine skill in the art. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner

Blinn, et al. is directed to processing electronic sales transactions thereby allowing merchants to create electronic orders which are easily adaptable for different sales situations. To achieve this, Blinn, et al. utilizes an order with multiple key-value pairs which are not organized with a predetermined format, and which allows a merchant

to add new key-value pairs without modifying the software instructions in the existing order processing component. Particularly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to draw attention to column 3, lines 37 to column 4, lines 5 of Blinn, et al., which describes how new key-value pairs are utilized to customize a electronic merchandising system for the different sales situations with a minimal amount of programming efforts. Also specifically enumerated at column 2 is an explanation of the use of the key-value pairs.

In particular, Blinn et al.

utilizes an order with multiple key-value pairs which are not organized with a predefined format. ... Each key-value pair, in turn, contains a value and a key which identifies the value. ... [T]he key-value pairs contain order properties such as the consumer's name, the consumer's address, the desired shipping address, the billing information, the order subtotal, the taxes, the order total, etc.

... [A]n order processing module processes the order. The order processing module contains an order engine and multiple components called the order pipeline. The order engine determines which components in the order pipeline process the order. Upon receiving an order form, a component searches for its assigned key-value pairs and adds its own key-value pairs necessary to process the order.

Thus, each component only modifies its assigned key-value pairs. This allows a merchant to add new key-value pairs without having to also modify the software instructions in the existing order processing components.

It is thus seen that Blinn, et al. is not split into a pre-processing stage and a processing stage. To this end, Applicants submit that there is absolutely no teaching or suggestion for such modifications as suggested by the Examiner. In fact, it appears that the Examiner has made a conclusary statement which finds no basis in the Blinn et al. reference.

In any event and in the absence of the Examiner's discussion to this point, Applicants carefully reviewed Blinn, et al. to evaluate the Examiner's assertions. This included an evaluation of Figures 13 and 15. However and as discussed above, Applicants found that Blinn, et al. is absolutely silent as to and does not even remotely suggest the concept of the pre-processing. In fact, the electronic order processing system of Blinn, et al. is not directed to and does not require any kind of pre-processing step for its intended uses. That is, Blinn et al. merely is directed to a key-value used for processing. Figures 13 and 15 merely show flow charts outlining the processing method of Blinn et al. as can be seen in these figures, there is no pre-processing step. Specifically,

FIG. 13 illustrates a flow chart of the sequence of states which occur when a consumer accesses the electronic merchandising system 100. Beginning in a start state 1300, the present invention proceeds to state 1302 where the consumer directs his consumer browser 110 to access the electronic merchandising system 100. Proceeding to state 1304, the consumer views the virtual store displayed by the dynamic page generator 120.

In state 1304, the virtual store offers the consumer a number of options. For instance, the consumer can navigate about the virtual store, view different sales departments, obtain information about products offered for sale, select desired items, view a shopping cart of selected items and can purchase selected items. The various options are represented with buttons, menus, or other user interface inputs which contain hyperlinks.

In the remaining steps, the consumer is able to either view items, select a basket or buy an item, all processing steps. Figure 15 further outlines the use of key-value pairs and merchant/shopper information stages, etc. None of these steps are pre-processing

steps as recited in the presently claimed invention. Thus, it appears that the Examiner's assertions are unfounded and has not provided a prima facie case of obviousness.

In view of the above discussion, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider the present rejection. Also, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner specify how the system of Blinn, et al. is split into two systems, and which system elements of Blinn, et al. would constitute the asserted pre-processing system. Also, the Examiner is respectfully requested to draw Applicants' attention to the portions of Blinn, et al. which are directed to (a) pre-processing ESO data prior to transmitting to the order processing system, (b) performs an availability check to determine the portions of the ESO data which can be satisfied, and (c) transmits at least a portion of the ESO data to the order processing system, as claimed. Without any clear explanation as to how Blinn, et al.'s system is split into two processing stage and which elements constitute the claimed processing stage and other claimed elements, Applicants respectfully submit the asserted modification of Blinn, et al. al would not have been obvious, and hence, solicit withdrawal thereof.

As to the rejection over Johnson, et al., Applicants submit that Johnson, et al. is directed to providing an "ability to search multiple catalogs from different suppliers" (page 4, lines 46-47). More specifically, Johnson, et al. is directed to an electronic sourcing method and system that provides a user with the capability of searching a database containing data (including product/vendor identification, and other product information) relating to items available from at least two vendor product catalogs, and the capability of transferring the product information for desired catalog items obtained as a

result of the search to a requisition/purchasing system for use in generating a requisition including entries for the desired catalog items.

However, the Examiner asserted that "Johnson, et al. clearly anticipates all of the substantive elements of the instant invention, except that the system of Johnson, et al. is an integral, unitary system, performing all necessary processing steps/functions, whereas the system contemplated by the instant invention, while performing exactly the same steps/functions overall, merely splits the various processing". Applicants respectfully disagree with this assertion. To this, Applicants submit that Johnson, et al. cannot be split into two processing stages because Johnson, et al. is not directed to pre-processing of the orders and does not require any form of pre-processing stage for its intended purpose of providing an ability to search multiple catalogs from different suppliers.

If the Examiner wishes to establish a prima facie case of obviousness, the Examiner is respectfully requested to specify how the system of Johnson, et al. is split into two systems, and which system elements of Johnson, et al. would constitute the asserted pre-processing system. Also, the Examiner is respectfully requested to draw Applicants' attention to the portions of Johnson, et al. which are directed to (a) pre-processing ESO data prior to transmitting to the order processing system, (b) performs an availability check to determine the portions of the ESO data which can be satisfied, and (c) transmits at least a portion of the ESO data to the order processing system, as claimed.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner failed to establish a prima facie case of obviousness and it would not have been obvious to split the Johnson, et al.'s processing system and reconstructing the elements thereof to arrive at

the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that all of the claims are patentably distinct from the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, if needed. Applicants hereby make a written conditional petition for extension of time, if required. Charge any deficiencies and credit any overpayment of fees to Deposit Account No. 09-0456.

Respectfully submitted,



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